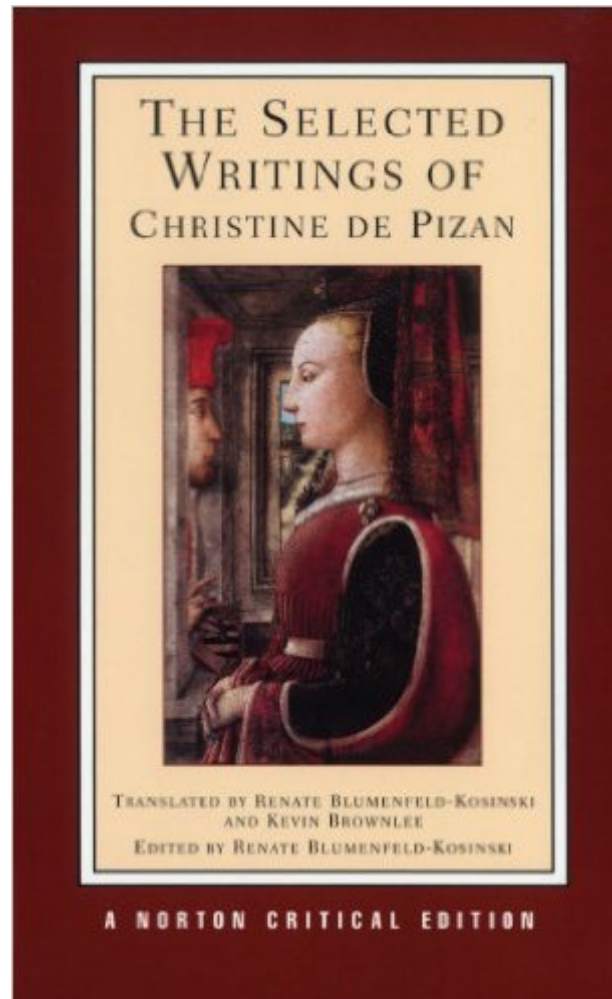


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The Selected Writings Of Christine De Pizan (Norton Critical Editions)



Synopsis

Christine de Pizan (ca. 1364-ca. 1421) is Europe's first professional woman writer. She wrote an astonishing body of work in many genres, including lyric poetry, allegorical dream visions, history, political treatises, and biography. This Norton Critical Edition presents selections from eighteen of Christine's major works in fresh, contemporary translations. Each text is fully annotated and is accompanied by an introduction placing it in the context of Christine's oeuvre and tracing the literary developments and the historical situation of the period. The Book of Fortune's Transformation and The Book of the City of Ladies include manuscript illuminations. "Criticism" collects seven important interpretations of the literary and historical aspects of Christine's work, by Jacqueline Cerquiglini, Beatrice Gottlieb, Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski, Sheila Delany, Patricia A. Phillippy, Joel Blanchard, and Kevin Brownlee. A Selected Bibliography is included.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is an excellent collection of excerpts from the writings of the 15th century author Christine de Pizan. Pizan, a transplanted Italian in France, churned out a massive body of work on every type of conceivable subject; politics, love, history, philosophy, panegyric as well as love ballads. Pizan was the first professional female writer, no mean feat in a male dominated world. I have to say I'm pretty impressed with her writings. She has a sharp intellect that shines throughout her works. She also uses her own personal experiences in her writings (Christine was widowed at the age of 25 and had to turn to writing to support herself and her family). Christine also studied the classics profusely,

which she puts to heavy use in her stories. The best excerpt was probably from her best known work, *The City of Ladies*, in which Christine symbolically builds a city to house all of the virtuous women from history. The reason is to showcase women who have contributed much to society and history, as well as to refute what Christine perceived as the tendency in male literature to demonize women. This excerpt has certainly made me want to read this work. It's done in such a clever way that the reader can't help but smile as Christine scores points against misogynistic egomaniacs who attack women for their own personal gain. The second part of the book consists of several scholarly criticisms that for the most part aren't worth much, which is why I gave the book three stars. The best criticism was written by Sheila Delany, who wrote that while Christine defended women against the attacks of men, she in no way was what we would call a feminist.

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